



El's Downfall by Carath

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Horror, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H.

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-12-01 15:14:54

Updated: 2018-12-01 15:14:54

Packaged: 2019-12-12 23:13:50

Rating: M

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,289

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

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Horror, Anger, Fear – and Love

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Disclaimer: If you read this, you agree to review and to give feedback! ;)

Stranger Things is the best series I have got my hands on in a loooong time. Since its theme does not leave my mind at peace, I'll try to settle it with this beautiful piece of a story. Please enjoy!

"It is there... I can feel it...instant pain, instant regret, instant hate...it wants vengeance..."

"Is it the demon?"

"No... it comes from inside me..."

...it is me...

...and it will make you hurt."

El climbed out of Jim Hopper's Chevrolet. He got out as well. They were in the woods, Hopper's cabin, in which El had to spent the last year, was infront of them. The scenery was eerie, dark and quiet. Way too quiet for what just had happened. In an overly exhausting final battle El had managed to close the gate to the upsidedown, even though the Mind Flayer had been so incredibly strong while trying to prevent this from happeneing. El shuddered against the outside's cold, put her trembling arms around herself and stared ahead, while

the past scenes recapitulated in her tortured mind. She was not trembling because of the coldness outside though. Instead it was her inside, her inside which was dead cold.

It has been a huge effort to finally contain the havoc, the laboratory had wreaked upon small Hawkins with their damned experiments. Everybody of the little group had outworked themselves in order to save their loved ones. Unfortunately, not everybody survived the endeavour. Bob, Joyce's newly found love had sacrificed himself for her and the group, Will had nearly died as well and for all of them life would never be the same afterwards. But at least they had a life. Not so much El.

For El, life was a riddle. She always had just been a monkey in a cage, an experiment other people used her for, a misfit and finally a monster. Right, she did not have a chance to choose in the first place. Nevertheless, she had killed many times, she had hurt intentionally many times and finally she had inflicted insurmountable havoc on living beings in order to survive many times as well. She could have run, of course. But to what avail? To Kali, just to be used by another person, who called herself El's sister? No, she had stayed because of her only friends: Lucas, Dustin and Mike. Especially Mike, who was somehow able to make her feel so weak, happy and warm, like she had never felt before. Indeed, down that whole in the laboratory, while Hopper desperately fought of the *demodogs*, as Dustin had lovingly baptised them, El was willing to give herself completely up in order to save the only ones who ever had shown her any form of kindness. She had indeed been willing to kill herself by exhaustion in order to close this gate – the very gate she was forced to open up in the first place by her "Papa", who himself had conditioned her with his very rarely given signs of affection to do every cruel thing he wanted her to do. El hated herself because of what she had done. El did hate herself because of what other people had forced her to do. El hated herself for hating herself, because it was not her fault. IT WAS NOT!

Apparently, the Mind Flayer knew that as well. He had always watched little Eleven wandering around the void, wandering around the upsidedown, wandering around her own little world. Eleven was not like the other humans, she was pure and honest, she did neither

deceive nor lie. And during that fateful moment, when El nearly had closed the gate and the Mind Flayer came her very near, their minds touched. El had been a storm of emotions and she was scared the Mind Flayer would try to overtake her. But it never wanted to. Instead, he simply asked her:

"Little girl, why are you rescuing the ones, even kill yourself in this pursuit, just for the faint promise of kindness? I am not evil, I am different. I know my nature and I act in accordance to it. Do you know yours?"

El was too perplexed to answer and too focused on her task of closing the gate to think and say anything in that situation. But now, as she was standing in front of the old cabin, her home and prison, she did think. Finally, she made a decision. She would be free. Never again, would she let others trample over her. Never. Again.

"Let's go kiddo.", Hopper said and together they walked towards the cabin. Even before they were able to knock, Mike and the others sprang outside and hugged both of them. They all were so glad to see Hopper and El alive and well. Together they went inside. It was such a merry situation, especially for Mike, who finally was able to hug El and to speak with her. And speaking they did – a lot. El enjoyed that feeling of community and the sense of closeness with Mike. They touched, laughed and grinned at each other so much – El had never felt this intense feeling before. Never again had she been so happy.

After a small eternity, everybody went to sleep. Mike and El slept next to each other on the couch, their hands intertwined. It was nearly dawn, as El slowly and careful not to wake Mike stood up, took her bag, which she had pre-packed months ago if need should be, and went to the door. She looked around for a very long and last time. There they were: Hopper, Joyce, Dustin, Lucas, Max, Steve, Billy, Will... and Mike, all wrapped up in a more or less comfortable but peaceful and joyful sleeping position. A hint of doubt flickered in her mind but it was quickly silenced by the harsh memories of her exploited past. With determination on her face, she opened the door and stepped outside.

She turned around after a few steps. Suddenly, she saw Mike's terrified face at the window, as he was looking for her. He ran to the

door, but El shut it instantly with her Mind. She felt his despair, his sadness, his terror. Hate surged inside her, for everything what had been done to her... With a nick of her head, she set the cabin on fire. Soon, everyone inside was shouting as smoke and flames quickly spread. They tried to get out but El mentally would not let them.

After ten minutes the voices died down and there was quiet – except for the flames eating away on the wooden cabin. El took a last look, a last thought at Mike, turned around and walked slowly inside the calmness of the woods.

Suddenly, she heard a voice from the void, steely and clear. It was the Mind Flayers as El recognised it instantly.

It said: *"Well done. Now you are truly free."*

And with that, a genuine and wicked smile spread across El's war-torn face, while the sun slowly started rising.

Author's note: Have you liked it so far? It was intended as a one-shot but if you like it, I will continue. Cheers!